

Martha Lynn Tank House
12889 Viscano Place
Los Altos Hills
Santa Clara County
California

HABS No. CA-2066

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CA-2066

Martha Lynn Tank House

Location: 12889 Viscano Place, Los Altos Hills, Santa Clara County, California.

USGS Palo Alto Quadrangle, Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 10.575720.4136650.

Present Owner: Fremont Hills Country Club.

Present Use: Rest rooms.

Significance: The Martha Lynn Tank House, erected circa 1906, is a good example of the wooden tank house in Santa Clara County. Before modern irrigation canals and pumping stations, pressurized spring water was stored in structures like this tank house and used in irrigation. This wooden tank house with a cantilevered belvedere is one of the few remaining tank houses in the Santa Clara Valley.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of erection: Circa 1906. Local tradition says that the tank house was built after the earthquake of 1906.
2. Architect: None known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The tank house is located in the Rancho la Purissima Concepcion, which was subdivided as the Laafe Plantation in 1897. Dr. Thomas Shumate started buying up parcels here in 1910, eventually owning over 400 acres.

1910 April 13, 1910

Grantors: E. H. and Mary Lowman and Minnie E. Landow

Grantee: Albert Tucker (Shumate's real estate agent) "Lot 19 of the Laafe Plantation subdivision."

1910 Book 29 of the Deeds, Page 156, May 25, 1910

Grantor: Albert Tucker Grantee: Dr. Thomas Shumate as above.

1915 The Shumates sold the above together with other parcels to the Fremont Hills Development Company.

1960 Book 4762, Page 607, April 14, 1960

Grantor: Fremont Hills Development Company

Grantee: Fremont Hills Country Club.

"Portion of lot 45 of lot 2 and part of lot 1, and portions of lots 19, 20 and 21 as shown upon the map of the subdivision of the Laafe Plantation." Approximately 15.703 acres gross.

4. Builder or contractor: Unknown.
5. Notes on original plan: Unknown.
6. Alterations and additions: At some time shingles were added over the novelty siding. Since the Fremont Hills Country Club purchased the property, the tank house has been renovated into rest rooms.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The water tank was built for Martha Lynn shortly after the 1906 earthquake by volunteer labor, and among the willing hands was a close friend and neighbor, Harold L. Brubaker. (Fava, Florence M., Los Altos Hills).

Subsequently, the Shumate family bought about 400 acres including the property where the tank house stands. The Shumate family retained the property until 1954.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Santa Clara County Recorder's Office. Maps, Deeds, 70 West Hedding Street, San Jose, California.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Fava, Florence M. Los Altos Hills. Woodside, Ca. Gilbert Richards Publications, 1976.

Girl Scouts and Sourisseau Academy. Windmills, Water Towers and Tank House of Santa Clara County. 1975-1977.

Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission. Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory. San Jose, 1975, revised 1979.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: This 1906 tank house is noteworthy for its battered sides and cantilevered latticed belvedere.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The tank house measures 17'-3" across, has three stories and is square in shape.
2. Foundations: It rests on a concrete slab.
3. Wall construction: The exterior is sheathed with redwood shingles.
4. Structural system: Heavy wooden timber.
5. Openings: There are two doors on the ground floor and one window. The doors are modern and wooden paneled with a flush hollow core. The window has plain trim.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape: The roof is hipped with wooden shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: There is a plain cornice beneath the roof line.
 - c. Dormers Cupolas: The third story of the tank house is a cantilevered open belvedere with plain bracing, posts and balustrade. The belvedere masks the actual tank, which is still in situ. An outside ladder provides the only access to the belvedere.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan: The ground floor contains two rest rooms. The second level is frame work and the top contains the tank and loggia. The ground floor has been modernized to accommodate rest rooms.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The Martha Lynn Tank House remains on its original site adjacent to the farmer's residence and horse stables. All have been incorporated into the Fremont Hills Country Club.

Prepared by Sibyl McC. Groff
 Supervisor
 Santa Clara County
 HABS Team
 August 1979

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the County of Santa Clara. The 1979 summer project, the last of a three-year recording project in Santa Clara County, was completed under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS; Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect; and Sibyl McCormac Groff, Project Supervisor (Columbia University); with David Schaaf, Architectural Foreman (Carnegie Mellon University); Jan Cigliano (Oberlin College); and student architects William Coppa (University of Virginia), John Murphy (Texas Tech University), John Lourie (University of Maryland), Anne Munly (Princeton University), and Matthew Poe (Virginia Polytechnic University), at the HABS field office in Santa Clara, California. The drawings were edited in the HABS Washington Office in the summer of 1979 by architect David Schaaf. The historical and architectural data were edited by Jan Cigliano and Denys Peter Myers, architectural historians on the HABS staff in 1979 and 1981. Photographs were taken by photographer Jane Lidz in the summer of 1980.